

Thursday, September 25, 1952

DUXBURY CLIPPER

Looks Back To Days Gone Aglimmering

PERSONAL MEMORIES OF
DUXBURY AND OF ITS
CITIZENS 70 YEARS AGO

By DR. JOHN ADAMS

A fascinating man was Henry Drew, a short man with a peculiar gait. He was dubbed by the boys as "Flut" Drew, and I remember the Needham boys who were about my age running after him and plaguing him. He was also a great artisan and built a model schooner which of course fascin-

ated me tremendously, and in one of his wild moments he gave it to me but later came to my house, demanding it back.

Margie Sampson

A personality whose memory is vividly associated with Duxbury was Margie Sampson. She lived in the house which now belongs to the Bassetts, it being the small cottage just beyond their large house on the left hand side of Powder Point Ave. Margie was the village dressmaker and I feel sure I am not betraying any secrets when I say she knew about everything that went on in Duxbury. She was extremely active in local plays given at the present Parish House and was the source of all information relating to the goings-on in the town. Her father was Granville Sampson, who had a 28-foot cabin catboat on which he took out parties. She was the cousin of Dan Winsor of the Winsor House. Dan was born in Duxbury in 1896 and left at the age of four months for England. On

becoming a young man, he served in the British Navy Intelligence. He returned in 1915, at which time he learned he was the heir to the

present property of the Winsor House. He tells me he walked from Kingston to Duxbury. He had no money and no means by which he could open up the Winsor House and make it what it represents now, one of the outstanding eating places on the South Shore. He borrowed \$100 from Margie. She went into the back room of her cottage and lifted up the floor boards and took out a box to give him the \$100 which he repaid. When Margie died in 1934 (the Winsor House being opened in 1933), no will could be found and it was through Dan remembering about the box under the rear floor that he was able to clear up the difficulties and her will was probated.

Prior to Margie's occupation of this cottage, a Mrs. H—— lived there and I was told by my mother that she had an imbecile child. Now that to a youthful mind meant an agree that would jump out at one and every time I passed the house I would cross over onto the other side of the street and run as fast as I could. Dr. Wilfred Brown, who used to practice in Duxbury moved to Plymouth, told me personally that he went around to call on some of his old patients, among them being Mrs. H——. Mrs. M—— was 80 years old at the time. Her remark to him was as follows: "Dr. Brown, you have never asked to see the cross I have borne all these years and I want to open the door and show it to you." And as she did, Dr. Brown saw a mass of humanity sitting on the floor. Mrs. H—— stated "This has been my cross for 60 years; I have never left it a single night, and my only

prayer is that it dies before I do." Dr. Brown said that the lesson he learned from this episode was never to complain about anything in life, I know he never did, as I attended him at his death bed.

I remember well when John Hollis built the house now occupied by Bob Estabrook and everybody criticized him for building it in such an out-of-the-way place. At the time I first came to Duxbury there was no house on Powder Point beyond the Reuben Peterson's and when Oliver Briggs, the billiard table manufacturer, built his house, the comment was: Why should a man want to go out in the wilderness and put up such a house?

Daniel Was Insulted

There are many personalities outstanding in character and prestige more or less familiar to people now alive. There are so many I cannot enumerate the details connected with their lives and their contributions to the welfare of Duxbury. There is one group, however, that was little-known to Duxbury itself; in fact, many people never knew that such a group existed. Reuben Peterson, in the white house on Powder Point next to the Manson house, contributed his knowledge of many well-known personalities and one could almost write a book on his personal contacts with these people. Reuben Peterson went to school in Duxbury. He was the brother of my grandmother. He had another brother, Ellis Peterson, the father of Col. Abbot Peterson, all attending the so-called Powder Point School at one time; at least their names are on the register. One interesting episode about Ellis Peterson, who was at one time chairman of the Boston School Committee, was told to me and was a story that was repeated by President Ediot of Harvard many times: When Ellis was out

sailing on the river back of Powder Point a man was having trouble with his sail. He stood up in the boat and said: "Here, boy, throw me a line." Ellis Peterson stood up and said, "I throw a line to no man who drinks rum." The occupant of the boat was Daniel one of the grandest personalities that it has ever been my pleasure

Webster. This is an absolutely true story. Reuben Peterson had a son, Dr. Reuben Peterson, who was a Professor at Ann Arbor University in Michigan, and his daughter, Jennie Peterson, married to associate with, John S. Philipps.

Visiting Celebrities

He was one of the great literary critics of this country, and he and S. S. McClure published the first 10-cent magazine. When he graduated from Harvard he carried mail for the Youth Companion building and McClure cleaned bicycles for the Pope Mfg. Co. They bought up stories and sold them out to Western newspapers, forming a syndicate, which proved to be financially successful. He was head of the Crowell Publishing Co. for years and that position brought him in close contact with many of the great authors, story writers and literary critics. He loved Duxbury and was perfectly happy and content to relax and sail with me and sufficiently independent to demand that anybody that wanted to see him would have to come to Duxbury. Rudyard Kipling, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Ida Tarbell, Thornton Burgess, Oliver Herford, and others, came to his house, where I met them all and learned to know them well.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Henry Briggs, the father of Eben Briggs, who at one time was coachman for Wright, and who married Helen Cushman (Eben's mother). They lived in what is known as the Thompson house which was then owned by Alden Cushman, a fisherman. Helen was one of the most attractive women

I have ever seen. Henry, as everybody knows by this time, ran the coaches to the train and afterwards

ran a sort of livery stable and moving business located near the bridge across Blue Fish River. Alfred Green at one time was a selectman and a personality in Duxbury. He lived in a house now owned by Wint Coffin and tried for years to get on the Governor's Council but never succeeded.

We used to have some tough winters in Duxbury and I remember well the harbor being frozen over so that Henry Briggs drove across the harbor to Clark's Island in a sleigh. Blue River bridge was built in 1882, preceded by a wooden bridge. The house at the right was an old blacksmith's shop run by Zenas Founcee, with Josiah Swift's harness shop just beyond. John S. Loring, who lived on Cedar St., had a coal and lumber business back of the Swift place. I knew all these people well as a child.

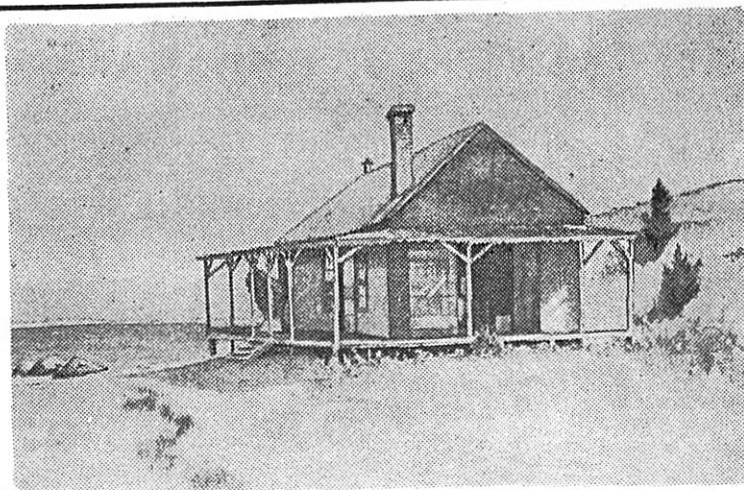
On Reuben Peterson's place was

barn. In a room upstairs in the back of the building are still the original pigeon holes used for filing papers. It is said that when the building was moved there were unearthed in the property some imported ivory handles and various articles made out of imported material brought over by the clipper ships. These were thrown out in the mud and later retrieved by the boys of the town.

Porgy House

There was a building down on the shore known as the Porgy House. This was the guest house

for the Reuben Peterson assemblage and was rented for quite a few summers by Reuben Peterson to a family by the name of Newell. During these summers it was the living quarters of many celebrated personalities. I have a picture of this original building showing a beach chair on the porch which brings back memories to me of the first woman I had ever seen smoking a cigarette. She was prin-



THE OLD PORGY HOUSE

a barn, at the end of which was what was known as the Carriage House. This Carriage House was bought by my uncle Reuben in an auction sale at which King Caesar's personal belongings and property were sold. This Carriage House was the accounting room for the business and it was bought by Reuben Peterson and moved up to his place and is now known as the Carriage House at the end of the

cess Gigi, who was a great friend of Mme. Hall, a Boston music teacher, who had three daughters. I used to spend a good deal of time at the Petersons and recall standing on the beach and watching this Princess Gigi smoking a cigarette. This obviously made a great impression on me and in the naive manner of all children, when I got home to supper that night I mentioned the episode, and my fa-

ther forbade me ever to go there again, a censure which grieved me and which of course I never carried out. This original Porgy House was washed away in the storm of 1898 and was completely destroyed. The present building which occupies practically the same location is called the Plover cottage. The main part of it was built prior to Revolution and was located in West Duxbury near Peterson's saw mill. It was purchased on Aug. 3, 1923, from Albert Baker of West Duxbury. The roof was gone and the sides were lying on the ground. Dr. Bumpus who purchased the house brought it here in 1923-4 and sold it to his son, Dr. H. C. Bumpus, Jr., in 1936.

(To be continued)
